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ABSTRACT

Three "in school" preprimary centers in the greater Toronto area were subjects for a set of case studies. Information pertaining to the establishment, funding, programs/services, and the nature of adult/community involvement was collected. Resulting descriptions revealed some variety in programs/services, such as parent-child "drop in," infant-toddler day care, and a parent cooperative associated with a family studies program. In all instances center provisions reflected the particular purpose for which the center had been established. Funding for these centers originated from several sources including parent fees and grants from community group/agencies and school boards. Although the exact nature of parent participation and/or involvement differed from one setting to another, the group of studies suggested increasing parent and community involvement in requesting certain programs/services for young children and their families, and in participation in decision-making about the form and direction of programs and services. Also revealed were different patterns of school participation/involvement in supporting the centers. (Author/RH)

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CASE STUDIES OF SELECTED PREPRIMARY CENTRES IN ONTARIO

ELLEN M. REGAN, Principal Investigator
ADA SCHERMAN

ps 015973

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The Honourable Sean Conway, Minister

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ABSTRACT

Three "in school" preprimary centres in the greater Toronto area were the subjects for a set of case studies. Information pertaining to the establishment, funding, programs/services, as well as the nature of adult/community involvement, was collected. The resulting centre descriptions reveal some variety in programs/services, (e.g., parent-child "drop in", infant-toddler daycare, parent co-operative associated with family studies program). In all instances centre provisions reflect the particular purpose for which the centre was established. Funding for these centres comes from a variety of sources including parent fees (in some cases) and grants from community group/agencies and school boards. Although the exact nature of parent participation and/or involvement differs from one setting to another, the group of studies suggest increasing parent and community involvement in requesting certain programs/services for young children and their families, and participating in the decision making about the form and direction of these programs/services. What is also revealed in this set of studies are different patterns of school participation/involvement in supporting these "in school" centres.

PART I

A Case Study of

The Syme Family Centre

Ellen M. Regan

November, 1984

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Introduction

The parent-child centre, sometimes labelled "family centre", is emerging as one approach to serving the needs of young children and their parents. Like nursery programs, preschools, and various forms of day care, the parent-child centre is concerned with child care and development. However, of equal concern in the centre are the needs of the child's parents/family. In this respect, the centre attends to one of the functions identified for the "family centre" conceptualized by Laurier La Pierre.[1] That is, centres "...function as a community service for parents and all those who care for children" (p. 72). However, to the extent that the family centre examined in this case study is a prototype of such centres in Ontario, these centres are more like the parent-child "drop-in" model found in Britain.[2] Whereas La Pierre's notion of family centre encompasses all care/education services for children (birth to eight years) and all related services for their parents, the parent-child "drop-in" concept addresses needs of preschool aged children, their parents and caregivers. One important feature of both "family centre" concepts is that both recognize the needs of all caregivers, including those who may be providers of home day care, and encourage them to make use of centre services and activities.

What follows in the first three sections of this report is a case study of the Syme Family Centre, located in the George Syme Community School of the York Board of Education. Case study methods used in this research included observation, interview, and study of documents (reports, narratives) relevant to the research questions identified (Appendix 1). My interest in The York Board of Education as a site for the research resulted from descriptions of this Board's preschool programs and services reported in the Canadian Education Association's publication, Day Care and the Canadian School System.

In July 1984, I met with Dr. Dale Shuttleworth, Assistant Superintendent - Community Services, to explore the possibility of conducting the case study in one of the Board schools which had a preprimary centre. I gave Dr. Shuttleworth a copy of the research questions and he described for me the history of the development of child care services by the Board. He also pointed out the role of Community Liaison Officers in relation to these services. He gave me some Board publications relevant to my research questions and agreed that I could contact him in September regarding a site for the study. After reading the material provided by Dr. Shuttleworth, I decided that I would like to focus my study on the family centre at George Syme Community School. Because this Community School houses both a day-care centre and a family centre (and, as I later learned, a senior citizen's centre) I was particularly interested in what features of the family centre distinguished it from the day-care centre ... and what makes it an attractive option for parents.

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1. La Pierre, Laurier L. To Herald a Child - The Report on the Commission of Inquiry into the Education of the Young Child.

2. Council of Europe. "Case Study on Parent Involvement in Education" Council for Cultural Co-operation, School Education Division Strasbourg, 1982.

When I contacted Dr. Shuttleworth in September (1984) he agreed that the Syme Family Centre was a good choice for study. He informed me that I should contact the Community Liaison Officer associated with the Centre, Ms. Katie McGovern, and said he would advise her to expect a call from me. When I contacted Ms. McGovern, she arranged for me to meet with her and Harry Oswin, another member of the inter-agency committee involved in the development of the Centre. This first visit to the school provided me with the opportunity to ask some of my questions, and my first look at the Family Centre. I was introduced to Rosamaria Andino-Dada, the Coordinator, and I also met some of the parents, including a member of the Centre's Board. During my discussions with Katie and Harry, I gave them a list of the research questions. They provided me with a copy of a narrative describing community involvement in the Centre's development. This narrative will constitute one chapter in a soon to be published text for social work students (full documentation noted in Section 1). After our discussion, Katie agreed to ask Rosamaria and the parents if I could spend some time observing the Centre's "drop-in" sessions. When the request was granted, I arranged the dates and times of my observations with Rosamaria.

Following my observations and the study of my observation/interview notes and the narrative, I prepared drafts of what are now Sections I and II of this document. I sent the Section I draft to Katie; the Section II draft was sent to Rosamaria. I then arranged to meet with each of them for their comments. I was particularly concerned with correcting any factual errors and any misinterpretations resulting from my lack of information. In both instances, I received constructive feedback which I believe improved the accuracy of these accounts.

The advantage of a case study is that it permits the researcher to treat a wide array of observations and impressions. A potential disadvantage is the human error associated with the researcher's inability or failure to observe, perceive, and record all potentially important data. For any such error or oversight, I accept full responsibility. The development of the case study would have been impossible without the willingness of interested people to answer my questions and share their insights with me. In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the co-operation of Dale Shuttleworth, Katie McGovern, Harry Oswin, Rosamaria Andino-Dada and the Syme Centre parents.

SECTION I

Three questions addressed by the case study (Questions 1, 2, 3 - Appendix 1) provide insight as to (1) how the Centre came to be established, (2) how it is funded, and (3) how the originators of the Centre view its operation with respect to their original purposes/expectations. The answer to the last question is inherent in the responses to questions 1 and 2 and in a partial response to question 5 (Appendix 1) which concerns adult involvement in the Centre.[1] These questions are considered in this section of the case study.

How did the Centre "get started"?

The answer to this question is, itself, a case study of how a family centre came to be.[2] It is a description of process and experience that provides a map (including the detours) which outlines the route from recognition of a community need to implementation of a response to that need. It is a story of an inter-agency effort and the school's role in this undertaking.

In the spring of 1981, school board personnel and social agency professionals working in the community, in consultation with members of a local tenants' organization, agreed that young children in the community and their parents had needs that required some kind of response from the agencies concerned. Some young children, new arrivals in Canada, were experiencing language difficulties and many children, because of the location of their homes (e.g., high rise apartment) did not come into contact with other children with whom they could play. As a result of these problems, many young children were experiencing difficulty when they entered school. Parents also had needs associated with the isolation resulting from their living conditions. These needs included opportunities to meet with other adults and places where they could go to find activities and playmates for their children.

The inter-agency committee organized to address these needs included professionals from Metro Children's Aid, Catholic Children's Aid, Metro Community Services, Cradleship Creche, Public Health Department, York Community Services and The York Board of Education. It is important to note here that The York Board of Education, through its Community Services Office, has both the commitment to community service and the staff (i.e., Community Liaison Officers) to contribute to this kind of inter-agency effort. Similarly, it is worth noting that a school trustee was a member of the original committee, working with the group through the fall of 1981.

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1. Additional descriptions of parent involvement appear in another section of this case study focusing on Centre Observations.

2. My source for much that follows in this section is Carniol, B. (in collaboration with Harry Oswin and Katie McGovern) "Intervention with Communities" in Shankar, Y. (Ed.) Introduction to Social Work, Prentice-Hall (in press).

The inter-agency committee did not set as its task the establishment of a family centre. In fact, there was, initially, some disagreement among the committee members regarding what should be done to respond to the needs identified. Some believed that new services for children and their parents should be made available locally, i.e., in the community. What was being suggested was a extension of services in the traditional social service mode, but services with "local" orientation and accessibility. Other members of the committee argued for something less client-oriented ... something that would engage community residents, themselves, in deciding what was needed and in developing the means for addressing these needs. This latter approach prevailed and was, obviously, a "grass roots" approach to assessing and responding to needs. In other words, whatever developed would be the result of community initiative and involvement. To this end, the committee distributed, throughout the community, leaflets advertising a public meeting (to be held in the evening) to discuss the needs of young children and their parents.

Because of the commitment to involving community residents in determining what was to be done to serve their needs, it was decided that the public meeting should be "open-ended"; the professionals representing the different agencies would not suggest alternatives but follow the lead of community residents. When only one resident came to the meeting that was attended by seven committee members, it was necessary to reconsider the committee's approach to residents. It was decided that any future meeting should not be scheduled in the evening and that committee members should make use of their personal contacts with parents when advertising the next meeting. In a further effort to build on the initial disappointing experience, it was decided that the second meeting would provide some kind of structure to which the residents could respond. Thus, the second meeting, scheduled for an afternoon, invited parents and their children to drop in at the school where toys were provided for the children and coffee was available for parents. Because of the ratio of professionals to residents (7 to 1) at the first meeting, it was decided that only two professionals should be involved in the second meeting. Five parents and their children "dropped in" and, as described in the Carniol chapter,

> ...the meeting went well ... and showed what a program could look like in an embryonic stage. An activity was offered to children; at the same time, parents could meet to reduce their own sense of isolation (p. 15, draft).

This meeting format was repeated on a once-a-week basis. The number of parents and children participating in these sessions increased as more residents became aware of the service. The policy of providing "something" for children and "something" for parents continued and set the direction for what would be, eventually, the Syme Family Centre. From the very beginning the inter-agency project was concerned with both supporting children's social development and building a support network for their parents.

Increased child and parent participation in the sessions was gradual, but, as numbers increased, some parents joined professionals from the inter-agency committee as members of an informal planning committee. By this time, spring of 1982, community residents expressed interest in increasing the number of sessions and finding a "Coordinator-Instructor" for this project. As a result, the informal planning group began exploring ways of securing funds to support a staff position and the expansion of services.

The planning group expected the Coordinator-Instructor to have the ability and willingness to work with a parent planning group, to facilitate a supportive network among parents, and to develop a program of activities/experiences for a group of young children. Such criteria testify to the commitment of the group to what became two critical features of the Centre's operation. These features are: parent participation in decision-making at the program and policy level, and service to parents - in a sense, decision-making by and for parents. Parents were involved in interviewing and hiring the Coordinator-Instructor, Rosamaria, a "new Canadian" fluent in Spanish, English, and French, and with considerable child development experience.

The current services of the Centre are discussed in detail in another section of this case study. However, some comment regarding the school's role in the creation of Syme Family Centre seems appropriate here. Through the participation of a school Community Liaison Officer on the inter-agency committee, the school and other agencies, were partners in this undertaking. The school made available for the afternoon drop-in sessions a fully equipped kindergarten class. A less tangible but certainly important school contribution was the support given to the project by the school principal and staff.

How is the Centre funded?

Any discussion of the Centre's funding must include a history of seeking and securing funds, as well as current arrangements. The school's initial and continuing provisions of space/kindergarten equipment constitute a significant financial contribution. However, it was understood from the beginning of Centre operations that additional financial support was necessary. A description of how the planning group secured this additional support details both the process and problems associated with such an effort.

The decision to hire a Coordinator-Instructor put the informal planning committee in the business of seeking money to support this position. The funds were sought through a proposal developed by the (school) Community Liaison member of the committee with the support of her supervisor. The proposal, submitted to The York Board of Education, was approved and supported through the Continuing Education Fund.

Other proposals for funds to support the Centre (and the Coordinator's salary when funds from the School Board were depleted) were submitted to federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government. All proposals included a statement of project goals, and presented the project as a community-based undertaking that was accountable to the community. Preparation of these proposals proved to be a strenuous task. Part of the difficulty stemmed from the different proposal requirements of different agencies - a difficulty that can be appreciated by anyone who has ever sought funds for research and development work. It is estimated that from two to four "person days" were required to prepare each of these submissions.

The following identifies some of the sources from which funds have been obtained. Also included, in some instances, is the amount of the grant and/or a brief notation of the use to which the grant was put. What follows is not a comprehensive account of all Centre funding to date, but rather an overview outlining the funding needs and sources associated with this kind of undertaking.

Self Help Grant from Children's Aid - $275 - funds used to purchase toys for the Centre (1982)

York Inter Agency Network - $200 - (toys) and - $400 - (for Coordinator's salary - working part-time) (1982)

Day Care Initiative - Ministry of Community and Social Services - some of the funds used to purchase such items as chairs for adults and play pens. Initial grant also renewed.

Metro Children's Aid Foundation - funding for part-time Outreach Worker

Metro Toronto Community Development Grant - $10,000

As funds were obtained to pay the Coordinator-Instructor for full-time work it became possible to extend the number of sessions which, at one time, reached eight sessions per week. As noted, funds obtained also made possible, at one point, the employemnt of a Outreach Worker. However, at this time (November 1984) this position is no longer funded. The present total core budget is $18,400, with the largest expenditure being the salary of the Coordinator-Instructor. Because the committee recognizes that the present salary ($16,000+) is not commensurate with either the demands of the position or the Coordinator's professional training and abilities, there is concern about how long such an individual can be retained in this position. With this concern, and others, in mind, proposal writing and negotiation for additional funds continue. Although residents are invited to become members of the Centre at a yearly fee of $5, Centre membership appears to have more to do with encouraging community participation than with obtaining funds for operating costs.

Another aspect of funding is worth noting. As the project grew and funding was obtained from different sources, the handling of funds became more complex. As a result, the services of a chartered accountant were needed and obtained - at a reduced rate.

A final comment on funding deals with the need to secure assured core funding for the Centre. A more secure financial base would enable more long-term planning, directed at meeting the needs of the community; it would also reduce the manpower required by present efforts to obtain funds from year to year.

What is the nature of adult involvement in the Centre?

A look at the history of the Centre's development reveals the changing levels of adult involvement, specifically the changing roles of agency professionals and parents in determining

services and policy.[3] The project which resulted in the establishment of the Syme Family Centre was initiated by an inter-agency committee whose members were experienced in working in the community. These professionals consulted and worked with community residents in responding to community needs. They also appear to have been committed to supporting this project while at the same time gradually decreasing their "directive" role in the undertaking. This was accomplished, over time, by sharing leadership with the parents. By the time some parents joined the inter-agency professionals as an informal planning committee, parents were asking for an increase in the number of weekly "drop-in" sessions and became involved in selecting the Coordinator-Instructor.

Eventually the informal planning group recognized the need for a more formal planning structure. The result was a formal executive council, which provided some permanence for the project rather than a leadership hierarchy. Co-operative leadership continued to be viewed as essential. It was also agreed that parents should occupy at least half of the positions on the planning committee. The professionals perceived this policy as a way for them to become more aware of community needs. Parents were demonstrating newly developed problem-solving skills. The growth in both groups was attributed to the cooperative efforts that were taking place.

The parents who participated most frequently in the "drop-in" sessions were, as a rule, the ones who became members of the planning group. The planning group became known eventually as the Board (of the Centre). Chaired initially by one of the professionals, the planning meetings were later alternately chaired by a professional and a parent.

The Board is planning an annual general meeting to report on Centre activities and to obtain feedback from the community. At this meeting, members (those who have paid the $5 membership fee) will elect the membership of the Board. Since its inception, the project has moved gradually but steadily toward community ownership and is now in the process of applying to register as a non-profit organization.

The effort and skills of the inter-agency professionals cannot be discounted in any descriptions of the adult involvement that resulted in the present status of the Syme Family Centre. Nevertheless, what distinguishes the Centre as a community operation is the increasing and genuine involvement of community residents in the planning and policy development that determines programs and services. Parents not only receive services, they have a hand in determining what these services will be. This is what the originators of the project intended and this is what has happened.

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3. Parent participation in the "drop-in" sessions is discussed in later sections of the case study.

SECTION II

Six of the questions explored in the case study (questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 - Appendix 1) were directed at the identification/description of (1) the type of programs/services provided by the Centre (2) the nature of adult involvement in the Centre (3) parent expectations for Centre programs/services (4) staff expectations for these programs/services (5) staff roles and functions within the Centre, and (6) any provisions for professional development of staff. In putting together the responses to these questions, I found that some of the "feeling" and, I believe, the sense of vitality of the Syme Family Centre were lost in attempting to fit what I observed and learned into a set question and answer format. Thus, I have chosen to organize my responses to these questions under two headings: An Overview of Centre Programs/Services and Observations in the Centre. In addition to describing the types of programs/services provided by the Centre, the Overview also comments on patterns of Centre use. The remaining descriptions are provided in the Observation section. The Observation section also describes the physical setting and how it supports Centre purposes and functions.

Overview

As described in its brochure, "The Syme Family Centre is a child-parent drop-in education and resource centre." Throughout the year, six drop-in sessions per week for children and their parents or caregivers are scheduled according to the following timetable:

1:00 - 3:30 p.m.	Tuesday and Thursday
8:50 - 11:30 a.m.)	
)	Wednesday and Friday
1:00 - 3:30 p.m.)	

Except for days when the school cleaning staff clean the room, the sessions for children and parents/caregivers are also scheduled during school holidays. During the summer, trips (e.g., Centre Island) sometimes replace the "in Centre" sessions.

On Mondays, Rosamaria, the Centre Coordinator, plans activities for the Centre (e.g., securing speakers on topics of interest identified by parents), handles referrals from public health nurses/social workers, and responds to questions about home day care in the area. Rosamaria maintains a home day care registry that serves parents seeking and offering home day care services. Home caregivers register with the service by completing a form giving information about themselves (e.g., preferred age of children, time available) and the facilities of the home day care setting (e.g., house or apartment, proximity to school/playground). Parents seeking day care complete a form acknowledging full responsibility for any choice made. It is made clear to those parents that the registry list contains referrals (for investigation by parents) not recommendations.

Rosamaria also plans a weekly session for a group of "special needs" parents living in an apartment building some distance from Syme Community School. The purpose of these weekly sessions is to assist these parents (many in the sole support category) to develop their

own support group and to provide an activity for their children. As this activity, and others already mentioned, suggest, the Centre serves child and parent needs at a number of levels within the community.

Between 150-200 families are making use of the Centre services at this time. These figures include users of the drop-in program and home day care registry. The drop-in sessions serve, on average, 18 children and 10 parents or caregivers a week, although attendance at a particular session may be lower or higher than this average (during one of my visits, 8 adults and 16 children - not including 3 infants - were in attendance). Some parents/caregivers and their children attend most sessions; others attend particular sessions regularly; some attend when the children concerned are not in Junior Kindergarten. (They attend afternoon Centre session after morning J-K session.) Special events at the Centre usually draw large numbers, as was the case with this year's Thanksgiving party attended by a combined child-adult group of 64. Although users of the Centre are invited to become members at a yearly fee of $5, not all users of services are members. Centre membership permits one to vote at the general meeting where plans and policy are to be developed.

Observation

What follows is a description of what I observed and learned about the Syme Family Centre as a result of visiting drop-in sessions. The warm welcome given me by Rosamaria, the Co-ordinator, and by the parents/caregivers, and their willingness to share their experiences with me, was invaluable.

The Centre is located in a large classroom which, at first glance, resembles a kindergarten.[1] The tables, chairs, easels, paints, books, toys, puppets, and record player all suggest that this is a room for the play and activity of young children. The room, the kindergarten equipment and supplies are provided by the school. The Centre shares with the school kindergarten a nearby area with climbing equipment, a slide, wagons, and bicycles. Rosamaria is quick to point out these school contributions to the Centre.

A closer look at the surroundings, however, suggests that this is a place for children and their parents or caregivers. An easy chair, chesterfield, a pot of coffee, play pens for the very young,[2] a place for changing diapers, and a cupboard marked "Clothing Exchange" are among the signs that this is indeed a child-parent Centre. Child paintings, a list of new babies in families, photographs of the Centre's Hallowe'en and Christmas parties and a poster inviting parents to donate toys and snacks share wall space with a list of topics parents would like to discuss in group sessions. Also posted are "Regulations" which state that

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1. The room is also used to care for young children of parents attending ESL classes on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

2. These kinds of items as well as toys were purchased with funds from municipal and provincial agencies.

everyone is expected to help and to supervise the children in every part of the Centre and to teach them to share toys and use them properly. It is also noted that parents and caregivers are expected to help in tidying up the Centre.

Certainly an effort has been made to make parents and caregivers feel part of the Centre; there is an opportunity for them to share a cup of coffee and converse with one another.[3] However, urging parents and caregivers to become involved with children in their activities is also seen as important. In fact, Rosamaria believes a major purpose of the drop-in sessions is to help parents develop skills in interacting with their children and to help caregivers develop similar skills in interacting with young children in their care. Such parent/caregiver involvement is also important for a very practical reason. Rosamaria is "the staff" and therefore must depend on the assistance of other adults present. Much of this help is provided by non-paid parent volunteers at each session, but all adults are encouraged to help and to supervise children's activities. At the time of my visits, I also observed another type of parent/caregiver "involvement". This was the discussion concerning upcoming activities to raise funds for the Centre. These activities include a bake sale, a raffle, and rummage sale. It was hoped that a Cabbage Patch doll could be located for the raffle at a reasonable price; it was clear that everyone was "shopping around". I learned, also, that one of the fathers suggested that the adults perform a play for the children at Christmas. He thinks this would be a "nice thing to do for the children" and is overseeing this project. Another parent suggested that the children sing at the Christmas entertainment and she is responsible for working with the little choir. All of these examples suggest that parents feel very much involved in the Centre.

Posted in the Centre, and outside near the entrance, is a description of the drop-in program of activities.

Tuesday:	Cooking for Children
Wednesday:	Arts and Crafts for Children
Thursday:	Movies, Puppet Shows Story-telling for Children Educational Movies for Parents
Friday:	Special Games/Show & Tell for Children Bingo for Children* Gymnastics

* a matching activity (my notation)

Once a month: 1) Field Trips 2) Multicultural Day 3) Guest speaker

3. I was told that one group of caregivers sharing the same cultural background meet at the Centre every week.

This posted schedule also includes an invitation to parents: "What activities would you like to do with your kids?" (The father's suggestion about the Christmas play is an example of a response to the invitation.) I was told (and observed) that although particular activities are set for a particular day, the program is flexible and depends on children's interests at the time. Rosamaria continually evaluates the daily sessions with an eye toward changes or modifications that are suggested, and encourages parents to observe and evaluate with this purpose in mind. Although there is flexibility in session activities, the sessions do follow a routine of free play, activity, snack, circle time, and clean up time. Rosamaria believes it is important for the children to experience this routine, to know what they can expect at the Centre regarding general areas of activity. She believes, also, that some "structuring" of the sessions (as described) provides opportunities (e.g., circle time, clean up) for the socialization and cooperation among children which she believes to be important.

Different parents and caregivers are responsible for Multicultural Day. One parent told me that she had organized an English day. (She was helped by her mother who was visiting from England.) English day was observed with English food, by making English flags, and talking a bit about England. Other such days have included learning to say "hello" in different languages, listening to songs, and hearing about customs associated with different countries.

Drop-in sessions begin, as noted, with a period of free play for the children. Sometimes the period includes going to the climbing apparatus and bicycle area shared with the kindergarten. During one of my visits, Rosamaria, the parent volunteer, and some of the children went to this area to play. Three of the children wanted to play "train" with the wagons and, in the course of this game, talked with Rosamaria about the "first" and "last" cars of the train. Children also rode bicycles and climbed the equipment available. Rosamaria believes that such activities contribute to the development of motor skills as well as providing activities which the children enjoy. When Rosamaria was called away for a few minutes, the parent volunteer assumed supervision of the activities, including the dialogue with the children.

The activity of the day during this visit was cooking (making cookies), and children were free to participate in the activity or choose another one. The older children (4 years old) became more involved in the cooking than the younger ones who seemed content to play with the table toys (e.g., Fisher-Price farm and other toys with different parts or figures).[4] Parent volunteers prepared the ingredients for the cookies, set out the utensils and supervised the children in mixing and shaping the cookies. A visit from a public health nurse took Rosamaria away from the activity and I was interested to observe how parents carried through on the activity with the children. When Rosamaria returned to the cooking she engaged children in conversation about what they had done (e.g., what did you put in the cookies that makes them feel so crunchy?) and in an easy fashion suggested, by her own behavior, how such an activity

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4. Rosamaria told me that toys children enjoy playing with at the Centre are sometimes purchased for them by parents as Christmas gifts.

can be used by parents to stimulate thinking and language development. While the making of cookies was in progress, another mother was sitting at a table playing with her child; other adults were visiting with each other and having a cup of coffee.

While the cookies were baking, Rosamaria engaged all mothers and caregivers present, and their children, in story-telling. Parents and caregivers were given a sheet of paper with the speaking parts associated with "The Three Little Pigs" and children were given hand puppets. With Rosamaria as narrator, all became involved in telling and dramatizing the story. On another visit I observed how Rosamaria again involved all adults and children present in the same activity. On that occasion, all engaged in exercise which the parents and caregivers enjoyed as much as the children. In fact, Rosamaria had to give parents and caregivers a gentle reminder to help their children with the different exercises. At the same time, she explained, and helped children do a forward roll which, she pointed out, children could be helped to do at home. Other activities observed (e.g., colouring and cutting a "Pig" mask after the the Three Little Pigs story) can also be done at home.

To support the posted Regulations, Rosamaria continually encourages parents and caregivers to play with or interact with the children - and generally with good results. This encouragement is supported by organized activity and Rosamaria's own interaction with children. She is a good model for the other adults present as she moves about the Centre, playing with the individual children,[5] helping them, talking with them.[6] At the same time, Rosamaria remains receptive to conversations with the parents and caregivers. In helping to set up activities and supervise them, parents find time for conversations with each other. At the sessions I observed, some parents and caregivers and their children arrived early and remained for the full 2½ hours; others arrived later and/or left earlier. Although the observer has a sense of the routine of a session, the relaxed atmosphere and kinds of activities permit dropping in and leaving according to the parents' and caregivers' own schedules.

The greetings exchanged when a parent or caregiver arrives, and the attention that everyone gives to the babies, create the impression of a neighbourhood gathering. This impression is strengthened by the observation of two mothers, each holding a baby, jointly supervising their older children's efforts to negotiate a slide. A disagreement over blocks is also likely to receive the attention of whichever adult is close by.

Parents indicated that they see the Centre as helping to overcome the feelings of isolation that they experienced as young mothers with young children "and no place to take them". There is also the suggestion that "mother care is better than day care"[7] and that the Centre supports mothers who choose this option. Mothers told me that their children want to come

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5. Rosamaria believes her observation of and interaction with individual children provides an opportunity to identify any particular child needs or problems.

6. I heard one mother comment, "This is a corner" in supervising some block building by two children...suggesting that some of Rosamaria's modelling is effective as a teaching technique with parents.

7. Reportedly, some fathers take this position also.

to the Centre and are happy there. Rosamaria talked with me about what parents want. Parents would like to have a larger space to allow for more activities. They also want their children exposed to music and, not surprisingly perhaps, would like them exposed to computers. Gymnastics and dance are other activities parents want for their children. As mentioned before, parents also want opportunities to learn about and discuss topics of interest to themselves. These include "budgeting", "children's nutrition" and "programs for children in the area".

It is obvious in observing Rosamaria and talking with her that she "wears different hats" in her role as Centre Coordinator: teacher of children and parents, developer of programs for children and parents, resource person for families seeking day care services and for different agency personnel in the community. Although she would welcome the assistance of another professional, and would certainly need such assistance if present Centre services were to be expanded, she moves easily and competently from one role to the other. Her multi-faceted role as Coordinator makes demands on her knowledge of child development and early childhood practice and her skills in working with parents and caregivers and other adults in the community. She sometimes needs to engage parents or caregivers in discussions about certain culturally derived child rearing practices that need to be examined and modified. Such a task demands not only tact but, also, the mutual trust and respect of the adults involved.

My observations and my conversations with Rosamaria lead me to believe that she guides her own professional development by taking advantage of every opportunity to learn about the needs and expectations of the residents in the community. Our conversations, as well as materials she uses in planning drop-in activities, suggest that she is always looking for ideas and materials that are appropriate for children and parents. In one sense, she is, herself, a provider of a kind of "inservice education" to the parents who, in turn, assist with the development and supervision of the children's activities.

It must be noted, also, that Rosamaria has attempted to establish some relationship between the Centre program and the kindergarten program of the school. She states that she has "a good relationship" with the kindergarten teacher whom she has invited to talk with Centre parents and to get to know the Centre children. Further, Rosamaria has asked the kindergarten teacher about expectations for children entering kindergarten. Some type of working relationship and understanding between Rosamaria and the kindergarten teacher certainly makes sense since most of the Centre children eventually move to kindergarten <u>without</u> any intermediate stop in a <u>Centre</u> day care setting.

An observer sees much that is impressive at the Syme Family Centre. However, perhaps the most lingering impression is that of a concept <u>and</u> practice of parent involvement that seems to be working to everyone's satisfaction.

Two questions addressed by the case study (questions 10 and 11, Appendix 1) concern (1) the way in which the Centre program/services are coordinated with those of other groups and agencies and (2) the support for the Centre provided by the parents and the community. Because the Syme Family Centre is a "child" of inter-agency co-operatives directed at responding to community needs, these questions have been addressed in previous descriptions of Centre development and operation. However, in this section of the case study, it is appropriate to comment further on the Centre's development as an inter-agency project and possible lessons to be learned from this experience.

At this time, Rosamaria, the Centre Coordinator, is engaged in what she calls "the first steps" in developing a family centre at another school (F.H. Miller Junior Public School). The Syme Family Centre experience suggests that such development should be conceived as a series of steps beginning with an invitation to parents and community residents to become part of the Centre. The Syme experience also points to a progression of steps <u>over time</u> i.e., an evolving phenomenon. It is important to emphasize what this approach to development implies with regard to expectations. In brief, it means that a family centre designed to serve parent as well as child needs cannot be created overnight and expectations for its programs and services must be set accordingly.

Another lesson contained in the Syme experience pertains to the kind of school involvement that makes the school a <u>partner</u> in Centre development. From the school's perspective, it may be instructive, after a few years of Centre operation, to explore any effects of the family centre on school goals or purposes. It would appear that the Centre provides the opportunity for young children and their parents to become better acquainted with the school and vice versa. The resulting pay offs in parent-teacher understanding could be significant.

SECTION IV

The case study set forth in the preceding sections of this document reveals how the school, in partnership with other community agencies and community residents, supported the development of a family centre. This section will describe the school[1] context and climate which facilitated the school's participation in this partnership. This description is intended to show how particular conditions, policy, and attitudes within The York Board of Education both supported this participation and helped define the school's contribution to the Centre's development.

An indication of the Board of Education's broad based concern with educational needs in the City of York is revealed in the publication, New Beginnings - the Annual Report of the Community Services Office for 1983. As noted in the Introduction, the purpose of this report is to highlight new ventures "..as well as to record other ways in which the Community Services Office has encouraged life-long learning" in the City of York. This commitment to life-long learning suggests an attitude concerning the school's role in community life - a role reflected in the New Beginnings document. Among the programs and services described are those relating to Adult Education, Child-Care Programs, Community and Multicultural Services, Heritage Programs, Alternative and Magnet Programs and other programs/services associated with the work of five Community Liaison Officers.

The discussion of Child-Care Programs identifies the twelve licenced day-care and nursery programs in schools that operate under the Day Use Vacant Space Policy. Also noted is the establishment of parent-child drop-in (i.e., family) centres in two schools. Child-care provisions are mentioned in the discussion of Community and Multicultural Services which include such provisions for parents attending Adult ESL classes during the day and bilingual ESL evening classes. The opening of the "new" day-care and family centres and the development of the Parents as Partners Project to assist children with literacy problems are among the highlights associated with the work of the Community Liaison Officers. In brief, the Syme Family Centre is part of a mosaic of programs/services through which the Community Services Office, in cooperation with other community groups, responds to the needs of parents and children in the community.

As stated in New Beginnings,

> The Community Services Office maintains working relations with schools, agencies, organizations, government departments and other community interests. It also enhances communications and citizen participation through its support for School and Community Organizations whose representatives meet on a monthly basis to form Chairman's Council, a group of interested people concerned about the quality of life in their local school community and in the City of York as a whole (p. 9).

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1. The term "school" is used here in the generic sense.

In other words, the community orientation of the Community Services Office emphasizes citizen as well as school participation in dealing with community problems and needs. Testimony to this orientation is found in the Community Liaison Officers' reports contained in the New Beginnings document. Of particular note in these reports are the numbers of meetings/consultations with other community agencies and various parent groups.

In summary, The York Board of Education, in its commitment to life-long learning, its policy pertaining to use of vacant school space, and its Community Services programs and personnel has the orientation and the structures to serve as a partner with other community groups/agencies in providing the kinds of services for children and parents found in family centres. Such services, located in schools, suggest a "new social role" for the school according to the Canadian Education survey of child-care services in schools (p. 36). To the extent that this "new social role" causes the school to develop new partnerships, there appears to be some acceptance of this new role within The York Board of Education.

Appendix 1

QUESTIONS TO BE EXPLORED IN

ALL CASE STUDIES

1. How did the centre "get started"?

   This question is concerned with determining who initiated the idea of a centre, how the arrangements for the centre were negotiated, and any information relevant to how the centre came to be established in the school.

2. How is the centre funded?

   This question is concerned with determining how the operating costs, including staff salaries, are determined and obtained.

3. What do those who started the centre think about the program/services?

   This question is concerned with determining how the originators of the centre view the centre operation in terms of their purposes/expectations in establishing it.

4. What type of centre is it?

   This question calls for a description of the centre with respect to the type of programs/services provided, (e.g., nursery, drop-in, associated with family studies program) including detailed descriptions of these programs/services, i.e., what happens in the centre?

5. What is the nature of adult involvement in the centre?

   This question is concerned with identifying different kinds and levels of adult involvement in the centre (e.g., parent/other adult involvement in determining program/service; parent participation in day to day operation, etc.).

6. What do parents see as the purpose of the centre?

   This question is concerned with identifying parent expectations for the program/services and determining why parents chose to enrol children in the program or use centre services.

7. What do the centre staff see as the purposes of the centre?

   This question is concerned with determining staff expectations for the program/services provided.

8. How does the staff operate/function in the centre?

   This question is concerned with descriptions of how the staff work with children, parents and each other.

9. What provisions exist for the professional development of the centre staff?

   This question is concerned with describing the nature of these provisions and the extent to which a need for ongoing professional development of staff is recognized.

10. To what extent or in what way are the program/services of the centre coordinated with program/services of the school and/or other agencies, groups?

    This question is concerned with describing the nature of any such coordination and the extent to which a need for such coordination is recognized.

11. What kind of "support" for the centre is provided by parents and the community?

    This question is concerned with determining and describing how well the program/services of the centre are supported by parents and community at large, i.e., is the centre seen as a valuable, worthwhile undertaking that responds to a genuine community need?

PART II

Case Studies of the Kensington Infant Day-care Centre and the Pearson Co-operative Nursery

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KENSINGTON INFANT DAYCARE CENTRE

The Kensington Infant Daycare Centre opened on January 1, 1983. It is located in Kensington Community School in Toronto. The centre was started when a group of Toronto Board of Education employees decided that a "work-place" infant day-care facility was needed and organized a program in the Kensington Community School, which was centrally located and provided excellent accommodation.

Setting up costs

Renovations to the space cost approximately $30,000. A grant of $10,000 was provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services; the remainder of the cost was borne by the Toronto Board of Education. The work was carried out by the Board's own staff.

Special requirements

No particular difficulties were encountered in setting up the centre. The Ministry of Community and Social Services licensing requirements were met with little difficulty.

Funding

The centre's funds currently come from three sources:

1. Parent fees: These vary from $78 to $123 per week based on family income. These figures apply to the children of Board employees. When all the places are not filled by the children of Board employees, the vacant places are offered to children in the local community at fees of $125 per infant and $100 per toddler per week.

2. Subsidy from the Toronto Board: $10,000 is received twice yearly.

3. Subsidy from Metro: A special grant was received to bring staff salaries into line with Metro salaries. There is no guarantee that this grant will be continued next year.

Staff salaries

Supervisor: $17,500
Assistant supervisor: $15,000 approximately
Assistants: $14,500

The grant from Metro added $750 to the salary of each staff member for this year. Since there is no guarantee that the grant will be continued next year there is the possibility of a decrease in staff salaries. The supervisor stated that the salaries were "medium, that is, not good and not bad."

The cost of running the centre is the responsibility of the Board of the centre, while the collection of fees and the banking is the responsibility of the supervisor.

The supervisor stated that the funds are insufficient. The staff's aim is to provide quality care, and while this is achieved with regard to emotional support for the children, the centre needs more toys. There is now only one toy per toddler.

Type of centre

The centre is perceived as a work-place day-care centre by both the users of the centre and the staff. Anyone employed by the Toronto Board of Education may use the centre, and it now serves 20 children whose parents are Board teachers, office workers, and maintenance staff. Students from Bickford Park High School who are enrolled in a Family Studies Course use the centre for observation; students in the Early Childhood programs offered at George Brown and Seneca community colleges are regularly placed at the centre.

Adult involvement in the centre

The supervisor is a working member of the staff which means that in addition to setting policy, carrying out the necessary paper work, and supervising both the infant and toddlers rooms, she works directly with the infants. The ten infants (ages 3 months to 18 months) are also cared for by a senior staff person and an assistant.

There are ten toddlers (ages 18 months to two and a half years). An assistant supervisor and an assistant are responsible for the toddler program. Policy regarding the two programs is determined at staff meetings and all members of the staff participate in every aspect of the program. Parents are welcome to participate, but since the centre is a work-place day care, the parents talk with the staff when the children arrive and leave; few parents stay for any length of time. The supervisor reports to a 15 member parent Board. The composition of the Board is as follows: one school inspector, the Principal of Kensington School, one member of the Kensington school staff, a day-care advisor from the Toronto Board of Education, a union representative, and ten parent users of the centre. The parent members must be employees of the Toronto Board. Parents from the local community whose children are enrolled in the centre, may attend the Board meetings but they do not have a vote. The Board meets once a month and will form a committee when needed. The parents are highly educated and knowledgeable about children; they do not wish to fit parents' meetings into their schedules.

Parents view of the centre

The parents of the children attending the day care want quality care for their children while they are at work. Most of the parents are teachers and know what to look for: they expect a stimulating program carried out in an attractive environment. This is the Board's only centre for employees' children of this age group; since most of the parents work in downtown schools, the location is a convenient one. Three of the centre's originators are still part of the group and they believe that the purpose in setting up the centre has been fulfilled. In their own words, the centre is "absolutely terrific". Information about how far the children had to travel to reach the centre was not available. Most of the children are brought to the centre by their mothers; a few are brought by their fathers. One child comes from a single parent home.

Staff qualifications, relations and professional development

The supervisor was N.N.E.B. trained in Britain and has completed the Montessori training offered in Toronto. She feels that the parents relate well to her because of her Montessori training. She is apparently comfortable with her staff; she describes them as "dedicated and loving, in a job that has many frustrations and many demands," and states that they work excellently together. As far as her own position is concerned, she reported that it is difficult to supervise efficiently and teach at the same time. Her role as a teacher in the infant unit demands her presence in the infant room, whereas her role as supervisor requires her to be aware of what is happening in the toddlers' room. She believes that if she is to encourage the staff and to support them as a resource person, an additional staff member is required. At present, the centre cannot afford an additional staff person. The assistant supervisor and the senior staff person both have E.C.E. qualifications, while the two assistants are now enrolled in E.C.E. courses.

The supervisor believes that the staff need stimulation and the opportunity to receive new ideas. Each staff member is entitled to one or two days a year to visit other centres or to attend conferences, but they usually do not take these days since a substitute teacher would be required; although a little money is set aside for this purpose it is usually used for something else.

Relationship to Kensington School

The centre was described as being "pretty separate" from the school. The school has a new principal and centre staff would like to see a closer relationship develop. Some of the furniture provided by the school is not suitable for toddlers, (the tables are too high) and the ringing of bells each period wakes the children. On a more positive note, the children are allowed to use the gym for a short period each afternoon and the centre staff find the librarian to be most co-operative.

Parental and community support

Although the parents are too busy to provide direct assistance, the centre staff believe they are most supportive. As one parent put it to me, they are "absolutely thrilled" with the centre and would like to expand the program to include preschool. They are currently negotiating for more space. There is very little contact with the community. Children from the local community are accepted only if all the places are not filled by Board employees. At present, 3 out of 20 children come from the local community.

Program

Both the infants and toddlers appear to be happy and content with the program provided. The staff, however, believe that because there are only three teachers for the infants, they can only provide good basic care. Individual stimulation and enrichment depends upon the presence of the community college students. Activities include: crafts, (e.g., painting), music, and outings in a four seater "baby bus" designed and built by students from Central Tech.

In spite of staff concerns about the child-adult ratio and the lack of material resources, the professionalism of the staff, the confidence which the parents have in the program, and the attractiveness of the surroundings make the Kensington Infant Daycare Centre a worthwhile project.

PEARSON COMMUNITY CO-OPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL

The Pearson Community Co-operative Nursery School opened in September 1977. It is located in the Lester B. Pearson High School in the Palmer Community of Burlington.

The need for such a school became apparent when a group known as "The Palmer Community Steering Committee" surveyed the parents in the neighbourhood to determine what needs existed. Two needs emerged: a preschool program and a parent education program. During the first year of operation the school functioned as a "drop-in" centre for mothers and children.

Setting up costs

In 1973 the proposed Pearson High School was designated as a community school by a joint committee of The Halton Board of Education and the City of Burlington. Nursery school facilities were included in the design of the school.

When the school opened in 1977 the City of Burlington donated $3,500 for outdoor playground equipment that would conform to the specifications in the Day Nurseries Act. The Lions Club of Burlington donated $2,000 towards fencing for the playground. Shell Oil provided a grant of $2,020 for capital equipment, while the Laidlaw Foundation gave the nursery a seed grant of $10,000 for the first year of operation. The Ministry of Community and Social Services allocated $9,743 for the 1978/79 school year to help develop the school as an early childhood education centre, to provide parent education and to assist in the integration of the school and the community.

Funding

Parents fees are the major source of the school funds. Since the school is a co-operative venture, parents are expected to participate in all the sessions. Allowance is made for 6 non-participating parents in each session.

The fee structure is based on the number of sessions a child attends and also on whether the parents participate in the program. Currently 120 children are enrolled in the program; 60 attend the morning sessions either two or three times per week and 60 attend the afternoon sessions two or three times per week. When a child attends 2 sessions per week the fee is $27 per month for participating parents and $42 for non-participating parents. When the child attends three sessions per week the fees are $38.50 and $58 respectively.

The parents also provide funds through a fundraising committee. The supervisor believes that the budget is sufficient for running the centre. The facilities, maintenance and rent costs are borne by The Halton Board of Education and the City of Burlington.

Staff salaries

The centre is staffed by the supervisor, one teacher and participating parents. The supervisor's salary is $15,200 and the teacher's salary is $12,600. The only other person employed by the centre is a part-time high school teacher who is in the nursery for a maximum of 5 hours per week.

Type of centre

The centre is a co-operative nursery school associated with a high school family studies course.

The children attend the centre for two or three sessions per week, either in the morning from 9-11:30 a.m., or the afternoon session from 1-3:30 p.m. Children attend either three times per week on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays or twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

There is a great deal of parent involvement in the centre (see next section).

Adult involvement in centre

The high school students who are taking the family studies course in Grade 11 spend 10½ hours over a nine day period in the nursery. The program provides them with the opportunity to see mother-child modelling in a very positive atmosphere and, through the program, to have access to the children in their homes. They are supervised by the high school teacher who is employed for five hours per week by the nursery. The nursery school's executive asked the high school teacher to act as a liaison between the school, the parents and the high school students who also do home placements. The teacher achieves this by greeting parents upon their arrival each morning and afternoon.

The high school also offers a co-operative program which leads to an additional two credits in family studies; the students taking these electives are placed at the Pearson nursery and other day-care centres in the community. These students are supervised by their own teachers and spend a morning or an afternoon per week in the nursery for one semester. They are given structured tasks to perform since they already have a family studies background; their work might involve setting up a science table, reading stories to a group, or working with individual children.

The parents whose children attend three sessions per week usually participate in the program once every two weeks, whereas the parents of the children who attend two sessions per week participate once every three weeks. Times are arranged by the parents' Scheduling Committee. Four parents take part in the program each session and work with the teacher and the supervisor.

The centre is run by a ten member parent Board of Directors of whom eight are elected and two are appointed. A general meeting is held every two months at which there may be talks, seminars or displays about parenting. There is also a Board of Advisors made up of the nursery supervisor, a representative of the community services centre and a member of the recreation department of the community services centre. This board never meets formally and it simply exists to give advice if needed.

Every parent must serve on a committee; the following list of committees is comprehensive so it is not difficult for the parents to find interesting involvement. These committees are:

1) budget
2) bylaws
3) cleaning and inventory
4) equipment
5) fundraising
6) library
7) parent program
8) photography
9) program assistance
10) newsletter publication
11) publicity
12) scheduling parent participation
13) parent orientation
14) secretarial
15) senior citizens (foster grandparents who may or may not be senior citizens come in once a week)
16) social events
17) supplies
18) telephone
19) trips
20) treasurer's assistance

This extensive committee system runs everything, with the result that the parents feel very involved in the operation of the nursery school. For the supervisor however, it must be like working for 120 different bosses. The parents give many instructions on <u>how</u> to supervise and often make suggestions anonymously through a suggestion box.

The adult involvement in the centre is unique in that it involves the mixing of four generations: the preschoolers, the high school teenagers, the parents, and the foster grandparents. While the program offers teenagers the opportunity to observe and to interact with preschoolers, it also gives the preschoolers the opportunity to enjoy the teenagers. The supervisor reported that the children often open up with them in a way that they do not with their parents.

<u>Parent view of the centre</u>

The parents appear to be happy with their role as assistants in the program and have the opportunity to make changes through their committee involvement. Everyone involved in the program lives fairly close to the school so there is much socializing.

Staff qualifications

Both the supervisor and the teacher have E.C.E. qualifications. The supervisor has had five years experience in day care; the teacher worked as an assistant in a public school for a number of years before completing her E.C.E. program. The staff appear to be very comfortable with the parent helpers. The staff are allowed two half days per semester for professional development activities.

Relationship to the Pearson High School

There seem to be tremendous benefits in the location of the nursery in a high school. Apart from the family studies students involvement, there appears to be a happy relationship between the nursery and the rest of the school. Students come from the French classes to read to the children; the children like to go to the gym to watch the basketball games and other sports events and to the music room to watch the music students practice. The science department has lent the nursery a skeleton; the auto mechanics class has repaired the nursery tricycles; and the woodworking class has built a large elaborate structure for the nursery playground. At Hallowe'en the nursery children toured the school in their costumes and followed clues which led to the principal's office where he awaited them with candy. The staff are also able to use the ditto and copy machines and the audio-visual equipment. The children's world is broadened by their presence in the high school, while the staff receive many services not usually available in nurseries.

Program

The two bright, large and airy rooms of the nursery are well equipped. One room houses easels and paints, a puzzle centre, a crafts table and an area for dramatic play. The second room has sand and water tables, a woodworking bench, blocks and construction toys, a climbing frame and a snack area. There is also a very tiny "quiet" room to which children may retreat if they feel so inclined. Both rooms have a wall of windows looking out to the outdoor playground and beyond that to a view of municipal parkland. It is a beautiful natural setting which provides a dramatic view of the changing seasons. The outdoor playground has good climbing equipment, swings and a sandbox, with grassy areas as well as gravel areas.

The children appear to be well cared for and are described as well adjusted with few problems. They have parents who are very interested in their well-being and who are prepared to make child-rearing a top priority. The Palmer Community is fortunate to have such an excellent nursery especially since The Halton Board of Education does not have junior kindergartens.

The focus of the program was well summed up in the supervisor's words: "The nursery is a place where children can socialize with their peers in an environment that can offer opportunities for the full development of cognitive, emotional and physical needs and where parents can see their children interacting with others and can learn from observations to modify their own behaviour accordingly."

DISCUSSION

These two centres differ from each other in a number of ways:

1. The number of children attending each of these centres places very different demands on the staff. The full-day program at Kensington allows the staff in the infant room to get to know the 10 infants quickly; the staff in the toddlers room are concerned only with the 10 toddlers.

   At the Pearson Nursery, the staff have a more difficult task in getting to know 120 children and the 104 participating parents. The job is made slightly easier since some of the children are returning for a second year at the nursery.

2. The attendance pattern is different for the two centres. The daily attendance at Kensington Daycare makes it easier for the staff to develop a relationship with the children, while the attendance pattern at the Pearson Nursery makes every session "seem like a Monday" to the teachers. It is difficult to develop a program when the children attend two or three days a week; the display of work and the leaving of block constructions present problems because the space is shared by four groups each consisting of 30 children.

3. The two centres differ considerably with regard to parent participation. Kensington Daycare is a "work-place" day care and it is not possible for the parents to participate. The Pearson Nursery is a co-operative and demands the presence of the parents. This has implications for funding since fewer staff are required. In addition, the committee structure at the Pearson school ensures that sufficient funds and good equipment are available.

4. While the location of the Pearson Nursery in a high school offers the nursery children many advantages, the public school location of the Kensington Daycare probably has greater potential benefits, especially if the program were to be extended from an infant and toddler program to include a preschool program. In this event, the children would move easily and naturally into the public school system. The public school would not require an elaborate early identification program because the strengths and weaknesses of the children would be well known to the day-care and preschool staff; this information would be available to the Junior Kindergarten or Kindergarten staff. This suggests that the inclusion of younger children in the school system might benefit all concerned, provided that the schools took account of the stages of development and particular needs of preschoolers and did not merely extend the system to include younger children. There would also be advantages to parent-teacher relations since the comfortable relationship that seems to be a natural part of the day-care and preschool scene would carry over to the Kindergarten. In addition the location of a day care in a public school would allow the school-age child in need of such care to

attend. The day-care/nursery world has much to offer the public schools and in turn the public schools have much to contribute to the day-care/nursery world. It would represent a forward step if conditions were created where these two worlds could share their expertise in the interests of the young child.